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Mephistopheles Puffeth the Sun Out

LUCILE VERNON

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MEPHISTOPHELES PUFFETH THE SUN OUT

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AND OTHER POEMS

BY

LUCILE VERNON

BOSTON
THE STRATFORD CO., Publishers
1920

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DEDICATED TO

THAT LITTLE GROUP OF FRIENDS KNOWN BY A NAME TOO LIGHT FOR REPETITION HERE, AND BOUND BY A PURPOSE TOO SERIOUS FOR EXPOSITION HERE, WHOSE LOVE "SUFFERETH LONG AND IS KIND." . . .

R. L. A.
L. L. P.
H. W. M.
D. H. H.
M. T.
E. Mc.
H. V. T.

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Mephistopheles Puffeth the Sun Out

"YOUR doting, love-sick fool, with ease
Merely his lady-love to please
Sun, moon, and stars in sport would puff
away." *
That's truth, oh, Mephistopheles,
Thou speakest, and the very crux of it
Lies in the words "would puff"; ah, yes,
"*would* puff"—
And cannot. Come, join hands with me, thou
merry Faustus devil,
Let us stand and watch them puff, and laugh
At blown cheeks, puffing-reddened,—all in
vain.
Yon goose has puffed at Venus 'till his eyes
Are bloodshot; Venus twinkles on.
Fool over yonder blows his lungs out,—
Seeks to blow out Mars. The idiot
Standing on that mountain sucks the moon in,
And all he gets in 's mouth is moonlight.
"Doting, love-sick fools" in very truth, oh,
devil,
And their ladies—you say you cannot jest with
them;

I dare—are greater fools than they are,
For they see the comic efforts to puff out the sun,
And laugh not. Aye, they believe, in many instances,
It will go out, being ordered to go out and puffed at
With breath from out the lips of lovers.
Ha! This is rare sport, Mephistopheles.
In three short lines thou taughtest me
To see much new; a jest; 'tis worth reward.
But if thou canst do that much then thou canst
Do all else that they cannot; puff the sun.
Go, do for my sake. I'll not laugh. I know
Thou canst,—thou, only; go I pray.

He's gone. He'll puff it out
But not for me. No man doth such
For love of her he loves, but for the love
Of him who loves her. For himself, in short!
And thou, too, devil, dost it thus.
'Tis done by thee!—Because, and just because
All that thou dost is done for self, thyself, alone,
And thus 'tis done. Thus only.

*First three lines from "Faust."

Joan's Lament Over Rheims

O MY cathedral, shattered and wasted,
Desolate, plundered, grey in the moonlight,
Skeleton, standing ruined and deserted,
Rose-window broken, lying in fragments
On the rude cobbles,—fragments once lovely
Jewels of the daylight, filtering sunlight,—
Rheims is laid waste by the invaders.

Thou wert my pride, the scene of my triumph,
Place where I journeyed, leading the Dauphin,—
Promise of France in my day of anguish,
Prince of the nation,—thither I brought him,
Crowned him at Rheims,—the altar of glory,—
Now it is shattered, turned to a coffin.
Rheims is laid waste by the invaders.

Great leaden tear-drops hang on the arches,
Melted by blasting fire of thy foemen;
Ruin-makers swarmed, grey rats 'mid thy pillars;

Stabbed thy Madonnas; stole thy white silver;
Tore thy rich draperies; scattered thy statues;
Burned out thy candles; trampled thy velvet;
In the fair place I won with my bowmen.
Rheims is laid waste by the invaders.

Rheims! Thus I mourn thee, weep for thy sorrows,
Mingle my tears with thine that are leaden;
Rheims! Thus the Maid of Orleans grieves above thee,
Sobs where she prayed, laments where she triumphed,
Then turns her face away to the northward
Where the great fires of battle-strife redden,—
Rheims is laid waste by the invaders.

Is Love Everything?

"Is love everything and duty and the memory of the past nothing?"—Eliot.

SHE'S calling you. I hear her. You must go.
Just touch my hand in parting,—say good-bye,
Be quick! Be off! Say that you loved her so
Her first call thrilled you and you could not fly.

Don't kiss me. We are only friends. You're hers
Where kisses are concerned, instead of mine,
Mine but to frolic with, as Kitty purrs
And tosses high in air her ball of twine.

As innocent as that the game we've played.
No love was there,—oh, perhaps a sigh or two,
A hasty, sudden flush that never stayed,—
But now it's over,—and she's calling you.

We can't regret; don't sigh; go answer her.
Forget me 'till we're old and life is through,
And then, and only then, look through the blur
Of years, and say we loved and never knew.

It must be that way. Love's not everything;
We did not know 'till now, and now it's
through.
Ah, well, a kiss, then, but it must not cling.
Listen to Duty. Go. She's calling you.

In A Calcutta House

YOU say I am a Sahib? Perhaps; no matter what I am,
Since I belong most anywhere from Lisbon to Siam,
What matter if my skin is browned by birth or only tanned,
If my mother was a nautch-girl or a Lady of the Land?
Ah, Sahib, when you've pulled as long at this black pipe as I
You'll understand just what your birth amounts to when you die;
You'll know that nothing matters while the poppy petals draw;
Life's never good to live while it can flick you on the raw.

I've wanted things as much as you,—worse, perhaps,—I've seen the best:
Great, dark, male rubies from the East, and women from the West;

Rich ivory from Portuguese. West Africa's hot coast;
An emerald from a tomb where lies a dried-up Rajah's ghost;
Mahogany, and teakwood, and carved, sandal-scented things;
Wee gods of jade, and dancers, and a set of magic rings,
And strange fire-opals; one black pearl, so weird I was afraid;
I wanted these as none beside has wanted gold or maid.

Now, Sahib, nothing matters, save the Black Smoke and my mat;
My pipe is more to me than all the thrones where monarchs sat,
And even it is nothing; and the hot sun beats outside,
And yonder is the corner where the man from Tunis died,
And the Chink who gives me Smoke is dying, too, but what to me
If the whole of India's people die, from Simla to the sea?
Why should death matter, Sahib? It has come to men before.

Or time? A day,—what value? There are
thousands,—millions more.

My pipe is failing. Never mind. I'll light it,
by and by,
Or, perhaps, I'll never need to, for I know I'm
going to die:
No, there's really nothing, Sahib, that I feel I
want to say;
I haven't any money. Jewels? I sold them,
day by day,
For poppy smoke. My conscience? Sahib,
very, very sear.
I've robbed, and burned, and murdered,—that
is neither there nor here.
I die,—now—very—happy—No! Oh, *God, man,*
what a lie!
I'm English, — white, — *God,* — GOD! — MY
SOUL! — Oh, mother, — help! — I die!

Triad

A BUTTERFLY'S reflection where he comes to flit and suck,
A dancer in the light; a banjo in the night;
These three be Sweet Sensation.

A butterfly's wing floating in the scummy river-muck,
A nun that prays, nor sings; and broken banjo strings;
These three be Desolation.

Cloudlets

HOW fast those little clouds go scurrying by,
Erupting blotches on the opal sky,
Behind the sunset, just before the moon,
And with the little star that comes too soon.

They come from nowhere, bursting into view
In somber color, steely, blackish blue.
They may be slight in meaning as in form;
They may portend the coming of a storm.

Wee, tiny wisp-things sailing on the wind,
No source, no goal but what they chance to find;
They fly and fly until the moon grows white
And scares them into hiding from the night.

Boat Song

A SAPPHIRE boat with golden oars
That drip bright, opal beads;
Slim, emerald grasses near the bank,
And down-tipped, jetty seeds;
Flat, crystal water far before,
A diamond trail behind,
And on the silent willow trees
Splinters of jade, new-mined.

Young laughter like wee, silver bells,
From sparkling, ruby lips,
And, lingering on the golden oars,
Pink, pearl-nailed finger-tips;
A face—a living cameo
Above an ivory throat.
Could one but drain his draught of death
Within the sapphire boat!

In the Heart of May

IT dawned the fairest, loveliest day,
All pearl in the golden heart of May,
And mother-o'-pearl curved overhead
For sky; little stars not yet to bed
Till dawn's long fingers, pink and white,
Reached out and put them all to flight.
Oh, the loveliest day
In the heart of May,—
And they buried her that morning.

The clearest blue and golden noon,
A sharp, little silver crescent moon
High up like a crown on Day's bright head.
Soft joy in the words the May wind said,
And tender grass for calves to nip.
Fresh honey for the bees to sip.
Oh, the loveliest day
In the heart of May,—
And they buried her that morning.

The duskiest evening, greyish and green,
And all misted o'er with smoky sheen;
The fragrance of blossoms in the air,
And mockingbirds singing everywhere;
Jet crickets chirping on the lawn,
And stars again when sun had gone.
  Oh, the loveliest day
  In the heart of May,—
And they buried her that morning.

In Memoriam

(Of Anne Elizabeth Spicer)
Who died in preparation for overseas service

I SEEM to miss you, yet I do not grieve
Because I know you did not fear to leave.
You thought of death as an adventure strange
And interesting; nor beyond the range
Of everyone to see, and have, and know;
Why should I grieve—you dreading not to go?
And then I know, by this strange, sudden chance
Your soul's "Somewhere in France."

You left me here behind, yet left me that
Death cannot take—your image where you sat,
And memory of your well-known voice and face,
Till your bare room is left a hallowed place;
And yet, your spirit's not so close as those
Of others o'er whose graves the spring wind blows.
It is not here, nor 'round your father's manse;
It lives "Somewhere in France."

Your shoulders bowed already for your share,
Your eyes were on the trenches over there,
You only waited to begin your fight
A few weeks longer, eyes turned toward the light
Of gun-glare where your noble kinsmen stood;
Your spirit could not wait; it left your blood
And body here. It leads the great advance
Of Victory "Somewhere in France."

To M.

HAD we been men together,—we—
We might have pitched our tent
Somewhere tonight 'neath the Northern Light
On the trail of gold dust bent.

We might have slept the tropic night
Beneath the Southern Cross;
In the starlight pale heard the conches wail
And smelled the burning joss.

We might be smoking by the rail
Of a long-forgotten tramp
Worth half its cost, while the black waves tossed
Below the starboard lamp.

We might be leaning o'er the wheel
In a Monte Carlo lair
To watch the rake that no gold can slake
Sweep the green baize table bare.

We might be sitting round the fire
  Beyond the jackal's cry,
With an empty cup, water-hole drunk up,
  Waiting quietly to die.

We might be out in Flanders fields;
  And that were best of all,
'Mid the fire and shot and the shrapnel hot,
  To hear an old friend's call.

And then you might be wounded sore,
  And I might bring you through
The showering lead,—but 'tis useless said,
  For we're not men,—we two.

Sonnet

(To M. T.)

Thine eyes are sonnets unto life, Beloved;
Thy lips are flowers that open but to kiss;
Thy cheek's soft curve is rich, incarnate bliss;
Thy hands are sea-shells, pink, pearl-decked, ungloved;
Thy voice is low, sweet, throbbing from a viol;
Thy hair is midnight, quiv'ring with the voice
Of nightingales; thy throat were Venus' choice
With which the cold Adonis to beguile;
Thy name is ancient, chanting Israel,
Its cadence mighty Moses loved full well;
Thy smile is a young mother's evening croon;
Thy heart is glowing, deathless, ruby fire;
Beloved, thy soul than all these things is higher,
It is the pale-gold gleaming, distant moon.

To E. Mc.

THE feel of your brow in the palm of my hand,
O my dear,
And the curl of your hair, fine like silk, gold like sand,—
Soft and clear;
The warm, pliant flexing of flesh in my arm's
Loose embrace;
The upturning chin, and the half-dreamy smile
On your face.

This is you as I know you and love you so well
Every day.
This is you as I feel your dear heart sink and swell,
Grave or gay;
With a kiss,—not too often,—just once in a while
From your lips,
And a soul, back of all, fresh and sweet, like the dew
Morning sips.

The Burden

THE warrior's mother wept in bitter pain,
And moaned in woe,
For word had come her eldest born was slain
By brutal foe,
Was nailed upon a tree and crucified
In far-off land,
Had died in anguish as the Saviour died,
Pierced side and hand.

The soul of her rose up at last in wrath.
"I go," she cried,
"I take his sword, I tread his bloody path,
Till those have died
Who nailed my son upon that bitter tree;
I go, today.
O Mother, Mary, lead me there with thee,
Lead me, I pray."

But Mary answered not. The mother called
Still to her name,
"Oh, dost thou, Mary, ask I stand appalled,

And bear my shame?
I cannot rest here, knowing he is slain;
Oh, lead thou me!
If may be, let me bear the self-same pain
Upon the tree.''

Then lo! the room wherein the mother prayed
Was filled with light,
And to her eyes a sacred form displayed
In mystic white.
The hair was long and gold like dust of stars,
The veins were blue
Beneath the eyebrows' slender golden bars,
The breath was dew.

Upon the coral firmness of her lips,
Her flesh was white,
And rosy dawn was in her finger-tips;
Her eyes were night,
For ah, within those sorrowing eyes was dark
And wondrous woe,
In them alone the pain had left its mark
Of life below.

And Mary Mother laid her slender palm
Upon that head

That bowed before her to receive the balm
Of words she said:
"Am I to lead thee where thy son is slain
As mine was slain?
Am I to lead thee to avenge the pain
That was my pain?

"I know as none can know what thou hast borne;
Weep on, poor heart,
'Twill ease thy dreadful anguish, thus to mourn
Ere I depart.
But when I've gone then dry thine eyes, nor pray
For me to lead
Forth to thy vengeance, nor ask thou the way
To fight and bleed.

"He died for thee, that thou might live as I
To pray to God,
And save by prayer a world that strayed to die
Beneath the rod.
I did not ask to venge my Son the goad
Nor ask to be
Beside Him on the cross. His fallen load
Enough for me."

Longing

I LIVE. The warm spring days slide slowly by,
Life passes as the meadows pass a train;
I am alone. It is not new to me,
I've been alone before. There is no pain
In me for loneliness. Not in my heart,
At least, but yesterday I felt an ache,
Yet not an ache,—not so much agony,—
A longing emptiness I cannot shake
From me. I love you. You know that full well,
But yet it is not love that hungers so.
A day or two would matter none to love,
And other lips are here to keep the flow
Till yours return again. Light loves—you know
How they are,—soothe a pain,—yet naught betide.
It's something else in me that misses you.
What is it? Is it soul? I can't decide.

Watching

I SOUGHT for you in the accustomed places,
I looked for you in all the little places;
Amid the books I watched and watched for you;
I looked with longing at the passing faces,
I sought your face among the passing faces,
I watched at dusk when all the world was blue.

I waited for your footstep in the twilight;
I listened for your footstep in the twilight;
I lifted happy eyes when someone came;
I gazed into the dusk with tear-dimmed eyesight,
I watched the dark'ning road with anxious eyesight,
I murmured low your dear, familiar name.

I waited, hoped,—they told me you were coming,—
How trustingly I waited for your coming!
And then one day the postman at the door

Brought word of you. I opened it, still humming,
(How strange to think, now, I was ever humming)
And read, "He will not come."
I watch no more ———

Poppy Petals

THERE'S a Boy like a slumbrous poppy
And his lips are a crimson red,
And his eyes are brown like the curls that crown
His delicate, princely head.

There's a poppy in Argonne Forest,
And its petals are strangely red
Like a splash of blood in the Argonne mud
O'er the place where the Boy lies dead.

You're Very Too Much Like the One That I Loved

YOU'RE very too much like the one that I loved
In stature, and bearing, and way,
And a sigh hurts my throat when I see you so near,—
A sigh for a long-buried day.

There's a trick of your eye-lashes over your cheek,
A mellow brown light in your eye,
A queer little serious twitch of your mouth,
A whispering song in your sigh,

A little up-tilt of your chin—just the same,
And the same planes of light on your brow,
And a waxy, cream freshness of skin, cool and clean,
Like jasmines fresh-picked from the bough.

There's a difference slight in the touch of your
hand,
Your fingers are softer than his,
And longer,—and oh! they've unbolted a door
Where a too-saddened Memory is.

Vie de l'Ame

"MY cheeks are young and I am young and laugh,
My heart is old and old, and sits all day
In ash and sackcloth, gnawing husks and chaff
Clean-beat of grains, and sings a sorry lay,
And hopes to find a poppy, strike a note,
In husk, in dirge, to deaden it for aye."

Oh, thus I sang, but 'tis not now that way.
Your love has come to walk with me again;
'Tis you, the you I loved; I ask no more.
I do not see you as I saw you then,—
I love you better than I loved before.

Need we those senses in this mystic world
That number on the fingers of a hand?
Lose we our All by bolts from Fortune hurled
To fall by chance, on souls or in the sand?

Nay, He who gave us souls were not so cruel
To make those souls dependent on a sense,
To tie immortal things by mortal rule;
Souls yoked to cells?—then were no Passing
Hence.

And so it is you come to me at night
And walk with me long ways beneath the stars,
Nor do you fade when comes the silver light
All spreading o'er the sky in virgin bars.

I feel your kiss, your arms, your beating heart,
I hear again the sob that caught and held
The night I sang before we had to part,
I see your breast that throbbed with pain and
swelled.

I know your eyes, my fingers touch your hair,
Again I feel your hand around my own,—
'Tis not a mockery; 'tis true and fair;
You dwell with me; I am no more alone.

And in this land of love we have our joys,
Our glorious souls, our life, our tall, fair son,
Far better than unwelcome, unasked boys
Who might have come when jaded love was
done.

"My cheeks are young and I am young and
laugh;
My heart is old and old, and sits all day
In ash and sackcloth, gnawing husks and chaff
Clean-beat of grains, and sings a sorry lay,
And hopes to find a poppy, strike a note,
In husk, in dirge, to deaden it for aye."

That song I sing no more. I see the way.

Misunderstood

MISUNDERSTOOD! And you lie there
half dead,
Believing the falsest thing that e'er was said
Of me, beloved,—that I was false to you;
How could you believe it, knowing as you do
How much I gave, how much I longed to give?
I risked my life's one chance that you might
live.
Not love you? Find another love instead?
You believed that? Oh, your warm heart must
have bled!

You believed a worse thing still than that, of
me.
I'm learning much with eyes too wet to see.
You thought I left you for that wretched gold!
You thought the heart you held so dear was
sold!
How could you think these things?—and yet, I
heard
And believed almost as bitter-false a word

Of you. I ask your dear forgiveness now,
Before the death-dew settles on your brow.

You're dying! O Beloved, sink not so fast,
Wait, wait, just for the sake of our dear past.
For us there is no future, that I know;
It is all checked by Death. God orders so.
Why we can never see, nor shall we try;
It being so and fixed, why seek the why?
The present, then, is all for our sad souls;
A broken past;—and gloom that o'er us rolls.

Misunderstood; O Heav'n, that bitter word,
Coined but for heartbreak, sorrow's stamp conferred
Upon a heart, and seared deep in until
The heart is burned and helpless, and lies still.
It burned my own to death within my breast;
It's scarring yours that's waiting for its rest.
Misunderstood! Could I but take your hand
And go with you and Death,—you'd understand.

Dead

KILLED? Dead? The words re-echo thru
the gloom.
The lips I kissed lie sod-bound in the tomb;
The arms that clasped me lie close on your
breast
Cramped in the coffin where is death, not rest;
The stalwart shoulder where I laid my head
Is smothered there in satin pillows—dead;
Your cheek once warm and rough against my
own
Is green and grey and clinging o'er the bone.

Killed? Dead? The very pulsing blood
That once raced thru you in a swollen flood
Is black and cold and thickened in the vein;
Your bones are dead, your flesh is dead, your
brain;
But one thing lives in you and comes to me:
I feel your live soul as it used to be.
I feel its essence floating from the gloom
On dead-white rose-leaves scattered in your
tomb.

Gone West

GONE west!
Crushed out amid a gush of purple blood
Lying, face downward, in the Flanders mud;
Lad that I gathered violets with last spring,
Undreaming what the summer months would bring,
And take away.

Gone west!
Last March it was we watched Spring come and dreamed;
Then came the Sixth of April, and it seemed
That Spring, and love, and joy, and youth had gone
And black, chaotic night obscured the dawn,—
You went to war.

Gone west!
The splendid body I so oft admired
Lies where it fell when some unknown one fired
Who never knew the mark his bullet found,
Nor saw the virile man it brought to ground,
To die in France.

Gone west?
Ah, yes; your eyes are closed, your strong
limbs rest,
It's something else of you that has "gone
west,"—
Gone west from France until it nestles by
The spot where I am; let your body lie.
Your soul's gone west.

Dead Love

I WONDER if that hour will come to you
When love, that love you have cried out against, is dead.
I wonder, when you've fought the tempest through
And it is past, and all the sunset's red,
Then will you wish another morning's dawning,
And will you believe another day *can* come,
Or will you rest, the burning love-sun scorning,
The heart forgetting, that lies cold and dead.

I wonder if the thought will come to you
That night and green-cheeked Death upon your heart
Are better than the heat and scarlet hue,
The fret and torment that are love's main part.
I wonder if you'll smile and see full clearly
With eyes no fog can ever dim again,
Or will you dream of power to love more dearly,
And believe that there may still be lovéd men?

I wonder, will you fling aside tradition
Which says that none of us can live alone,
Acknowledge all the thoroughness of transition
That comes when love is too well-slain to moan,
Confess that none may ever make your heart
beat
The faster by a single second's length,
Confess that ne'er again for you can lips meet
In kiss where lust's forgot in love's pure
strength?

Or will you love, I wonder, all unbelieving
That dimpled Love could ever have a grave,
And will your life's love keep you from per-
ceiving
That life can take away the gift youth gave?
And will the one flame in your untorn heart
burn,
Kept bright by loyalty, warm by home-life's
fuel,
Or will you, broken on the wheel's turn,
See that dead love, alone, of all things is not
cruel?

'Tis always thus I muse when I see lovers,
Or those who have loved, or who may love, yet,
Or those above whose heads a heartbreak hovers,
Or those who lie, caught in a loveless net.
I probe, sometimes, to find if hearts are living;
Perhaps I hurt; I do not know, nor care,
Perhaps; true, all the thought I'm giving
To life, is but to learn how live souls fare.

I wonder if you'll wonder where my heart is,
And wonder, is it quick or is it dead,
And wonder, could it be my soul's best part is
Buried, and my soul is in my head;
Or will you say it must be living, beating,
Loving, knowing the love that's from above,
Or else I could not write so fleeting,
Unembittered an acceptance of Dead Love?

The Shrine

AS I was passing on the walk one morn
Not long ago, and pond'ring God, I heard,
Close to my side, the querying, low soft note,
The gentle cooing of a peaceful bird.

I turned and gazed across the blackened sward
Which cleansing fire had swept the night before;
The fresh-burnt odor mingled with the mist
Which spread the frost-touched, sparkling, sweet earth o'er.

And there, before, I saw as fair a sight
As ever greeted beauty-loving eyes.
A flock of doves was feeding on the sward,
And now and then a single bird would rise

And circle, cooing softly to his mates,
And move his snowy wings, and gently bless
As one among a group of angels might
Bestow a benediction,—half caress.

And even as I watched it seemed to me
That here was pure white beauty,—here was God;
And lo! my soul ceased pondering and knelt
Before the snow-white doves and blackened sod.

Love-Flowers

ROB, Rob, was it so long ago we sinned?
Our babe's a child; that love-flower's grown so wise
I dare not see her, more. The sisters say
She might remember some day, and surmise
The reason for the bitter, longing love
Deep in an unknown woman's hungry eyes.

And so I kissed our Julie long today,
(She asked me, softly, why I always cried);
The sister in her sable veil and robe
Saw my unbanded finger, knew, and sighed,
And, as I turned to go, she murmured soft,
Her beads clasped tight, "Ah, Mother, my child died."

I paused and looked into her lustrous eyes,—
Black pearls that gleamed beneath her sombre veil,—
Then down at Julie's thick, gold-threaded hair.
"Next time you kneel before your altar rail,
Thank God it did," I said. The sister bowed,
"I do,"—but her calm, gentle face grew pale.

"It Is To Laugh"

THERE is nothing in life but laughter,—
And that is a jest itself,—
From the dreams of an amorous lover
To a thief's ill-gotten pelf,
For the one will be false and the other be brass
And their owners the jests of the crowds that pass,—
Broken dolls on the Toysmith's shelf.

There is nothing in life but laughter,
The laughter of Destiny's jeers,
Ironic, sarcastic, and—mirthless,
Scarce fitted for drying of tears.
There is nothing more bitter than Fate's little quip,
Deep scarrings are made by her coin's little flip,
Her laughter awakens our fears.

Yet, there's nothing in life but laughter,
So why should we ever be sad?
And there's nothing in laughter but cruelty,
So why should we ever be glad?
Thus, life's sole relief is unfeeling existence,
Yet a theory of paralyzed life lacks consistence—
If Earth knew the truth 'twould go mad:

That there's nothing in life but laughter,
"Fate's irony's" more than a phrase,
And the things that we think we have buried
Appear again, leaving us dazed.
The things called eternal are quickest to die,
The men marked as liars are least apt to lie,—
" 'Tis to laugh" at the world's twisted ways.

The Last Desire

WHEN the body is dying, the heart is dead,
And all that will ever be said is said,
And all that will ever be done is done,
And the tired eyes look at the setting sun
In a parting token of last farewell,
And the tired ears hark to the evening bell
Once more, ere the funeral toll is rung,
When the song of a life at last is sung,
And the gloomy mourners begin to weep,
And the white lids droop for the final sleep,
'Tis then that the new-freed soul turns back
And looks once more at the beaten track,
And, before it speeds to the far Above,
Knows its last desire—a mother's love.

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